

**House Science, Space and Technology
Joint Hearing
Subcommittee on Energy and Subcommittee on the Environment**

“Hydraulic Fracturing Research Activities”

May 26, 2013, 10:00am

Members Present

Lamar Smith, Chairman (Science, Space and Technology Committee) – (TX)

Cynthia Lummis, Chairman (Energy) - (WY)

Eric Swalwell, Ranking (Energy) - (CA)

Chris Stewart, Chairman (Environment) – (UT)

Suzanne Bonamici, Ranking (Environment) – (OR)

Ralph Hall (TX)

Randy Neugebauer (TX)

Randy Weber (TX)

Kevin Cramer (ND)

Marc Veasey (CA)

Dana Rohrabacher (WS)

Panel

Dr. Kevin Teichman, Senior Science Advisor, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. Guido DeHoratiis, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oil and Gas, Office of Fossil Energy, Department of Energy

Dr. David Russ, Regional Executive, Northeast Area, U.S. Geological Survey

Dr. Robin Ikeda, Acting Director, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Department of Health and Human Services

Hearing Highlights and Questions

Chairman Lummis: A year after President original announcement (Executive Order 13605), the administration has still not released the draft research plan. Administration has terrible track record of unsubstantiated allegations when it comes to hydraulic fracturing. EPA put Pavillion in the national spotlight with draft report implying fracking for the groundwater contamination. The EPA’s non peer reviewed

Pavillion, WY report is deeply flawed. EPA should abandon the report and return to collaborative effort. Will be sure to follow-up with EPA to ensure that they get it. Decisions should be based on peer reviewed science. Expressed frustration with EPA refusal to send Bob Sussman to the hearing.

To All Agencies: In FY 13, EPA, DOE, DOI were given combined total of \$45million for fracking related research. How does each Agency plan to spend this year related to this proposal? Had very unsatisfying conversation with former Administration Jackson on EPA found no conclusion evidence that HF caused contamination. Pavillion draft report that was extremely critical and wrong and created flurry of concern about HF and has now been impeached. How can you assure me this will not happen again. How does EPA plan to use research funds that will not duplicate efforts of other agencies? Is the drinking water contaminated by fracking. EPA is not distinguishing between drinking water vs. groundwater. EPA was responsive for the contamination in Pavillion. The (Pavillion) report was not peer reviewed, it was exaggerated and false. Research Plan -- Will you commit to give the Committee the plan? Why are you spending money on a research plan that has not been released to the public or been given for public comment?

Eric Swalwell: Agree with those that say in terms of our country's energy resources, we should take an all of the above approach. What can fracking do to cause earthquakes? Short-sided to produce energy, only to learn it causes seismic activity. With, fracking we need to proceed with extreme caution. Fracking may be better for one state, may not be good for another, a topic he would like to explore further. Will research plan examine recycling wastewater produced from fracking? Would you agree we must proceed with caution but may find that some states may be better suited for fracking exploration than another?

Chairman Stewart: Unconventional oil and gas development enabled by hydraulic fracturing is a rare bright spot in our otherwise glooming economy for over the past few. Also, disappointed with EPA's declined to send Bob Sussman. This action invites suspicion, hope this is an exception and not a trend. Past and ongoing study and investigations demonstrate cart before the horse approach to the science to make Members think twice about signing a blank check to the Administration. Greenhouse gas emissions pose a threat. Natural gas cleanest form of energy. No proven instances of contamination due to HF, have we done something wrong? The agency is more interested in rush decisions, which are detrimental. Searching for problems as a pretext for regulation rather than focusing on the science is a waste of time, a waste of resources, and runs counter to the national interest. Commitment that the Agency will work within the normal protocols (science based) and not put out information that the media will run with (misinformation).

Suzanne Bonamici: Commented on climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. What is EPA is doing with regards to the ongoing study on HF and the possibility of methane gas emissions? What are the stakeholder input efforts for communicating with stakeholders in the research plan?

Chairman Smith: Widely publicized unsubstantiated charges that fracking pollutes ground water has led many to question the safety of this practice. The EPA is at the center of this debate, linking fracking to water contamination in at least three cases, only to be forced to retract their statements after further scrutiny.

Ralph Hall: Agency is more interested in rush judgement and placing information in the hands of the media than in looking for sound scientific approach. "It is pitiful, EPA is not in business for jobs". Can you assure the Committee that EPA will not use the steering committee or the interagency working group to search for holes to regulate HF, and help the Committee search for jobs? The EPA will not use false or unrelated testimony that the agency will have to go back on? Comment: Horse in Kentucky derby, named Frack-Daddy that has the same odds that EPA has with him 45-1.

Marc Veasley: Inquired about resources being set in urban settings. Is any of the research centered on natural gas in an urban setting. Drought and fresh water reserves -- Will any of the research include work on water recycling? Earthquakes associated -- How serious is the issue with earthquakes in terms of frequency and intensity?

EPA committed to check on the research resources in urban areas.

Dana Rohrabacher: Rep. Rohrabacher left the hearing early, to start his own hearing. He indicated he will be submitting questions for the record.

END OF HEARING

These are only hearing highlights. Please view the hearing in its entirety for highlights from the 1st panel at <http://science.house.gov/hearing/subcommittees-energy-hearing-review-federal-hydraulic-fracturing-research-activities>.